

SUFFOLK NANSEMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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When Angus Hines built this house in 1926-1927 he cleared what might have been farmland not long before. The sunroom on the right was lost in a 1960s addition.

Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Birdsong.

Riverview: Tradition with a Twist

“Riverview” is the name Benjamin Dumville gave the farm he bought when he came to Suffolk from New York in 1876. The old farm was bordered on the West by Smith’s Creek and on the North and East by the Nansemond River. In 1890 the Riverview Land and Development Co. was chartered by J. M. Butler, president of a buggy company., and by R. L. Brewer, Jr., proprietor of R. L. Brewer and Son Jewelers. The new company bought the Dumville farm and kept the name given by Mr. Dumville.

A 1907 Bird’s Eye View of Suffolk shows the streets that had been planned for Riverview, but nearly two decades would pass before homes would be constructed there. At the time Riverview was considered quite far from downtown—practically country living! Many citizens were accustomed to walking to work, to church, or to shop. Living in Riverview made owning a car a necessity. The large wooded lots of Riverview fronted streets that were unpaved until the 1930s. In the early years the City regularly sent a horse-drawn water wagon to wet down the dusty streets in dry weather.

In the mid-twentieth century Smith’s Creek and part of Cohoon’s Creek were dammed, creating Lake Meade. This made for expansive new water views for many of the oldest houses in the neighborhood. Development continued through much of the twentieth century, with the last Riverview Land Co. lots being sold in the 1990s.

Special thanks to our 2014 Candlelight Tour Sponsors



Carr Investments; Ferguson, Rawls, & Raines; Nansemond Insurance Agency;

R.W. Baker & Co. Funeral Home; Chorey & Associates; Suffolk News-Herald; Ladies of Riverview

This year's Candlelight Tour features six Riverview houses varying in age and style from a 1920s English cottage-style home to a mid-century modern home with a large contemporary addition.

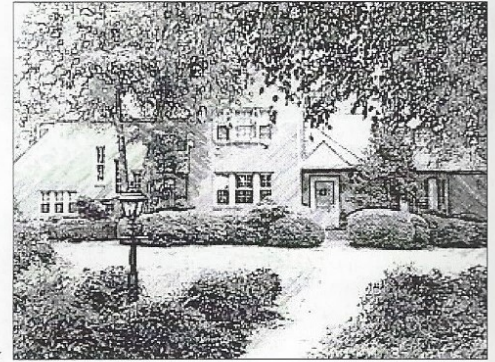
Come see the old neighborhood dressed up for the holidays but expect some surprises because this year it's tradition with a twist!

The Hines-Birdsong House **810 West Riverview Drive**

Development in Riverview was just getting underway when Mr. and Mrs. Angus Hines bought their lot in Riverview in 1925. Actually, they bought several lots as did most of the early homeowners in Riverview. Eventually the Hines' land totaled about an acre. Mr. Hines (1894-1953) was born in Southhampton County. After trying his hand at numerous other businesses—including working at the Virginia Buggy Co. in Franklin—he came to Suffolk to keep books for Pruden Hardware. Eventually Hines became involved in the oil business.

As Mr. and Mrs. Hines prepared to build their new house out in Riverview, they chose T. David Fitz-Gibbon of Norfolk as their architect. Nussman and Cox of Suffolk built the English cottage-style house. An especially pleasing feature was a sunroom or sunporch with sliding glass panels that could be pushed to the side in the summer to create a screened porch. It was, no doubt, a pleasant place to enjoy the garden and the view of Smith's Creek across Riverview Drive. In the 1960s after the elder Mr. and Mrs. Hines died, Mr. and Mrs. Angus Hines, Jr. and their children came to live in his family home. They hired the original architectural firm to plan an addition to the house. A new entrance, living room, and master suite replaced the sunroom. A subsequent owner enlarged the kitchen and den and added a swimming pool at the back of the property. The current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Everett Birdsong, have created a warm family home where they will share with tour guests family Christmas traditions in both holiday decorating and festive food for the season.

Information thanks to Angus Hines, Jr. and Miriam Birdsong



The Eley-Woodward House **824 West Riverview Drive**



About the same time the Hines house was being built, Mr. and Mrs. Henry S. Eley must have been planning their new home. The Eleys purchased their lots in 1925. At the time Laurel Cliff Country Club was still in operation and could be reached by way of a bridge just down the hill from the Eley house at that early date the last house on the street.

Mr. Eley (1871-1952) was City Treasurer of the old City of Suffolk and his wife, Estelle (1876-1954), was active in the community, especially in the charitable organization, the Kings Daughters of which she was state president for many years and was elected international president in 1936. Their lovely two and a half story house held forth on a hill overlooking the water. The front door was especially handsome with its leaded glass surrounds. Like many, perhaps most, of the neighborhood houses it had a sleeping porch for cooler summer sleeping.

A few families lived in the house after Mr. and Mrs. Eley were gone but the house was not sold by the heirs until 1989. A subsequent owner altered the front door a bit and enlarged the kitchen. The sleeping porch was given another use (it's not open for tour). The biggest change, however, was the addition of a spacious new den—a thoroughly beautiful room—with banks of windows on three sides affording breathtaking views of the surrounding trees and Lake Meade. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Woodward, III, bought the house in 2011 and brought with them a fresh new look for their young family.

Information thanks to Lee Hart

Ellison-White House **537 West Riverview Drive**

Dr. Roland Ellison (1904-1957) was one of the physicians at old Lakeview Hospital on Bosley Avenue when he and his wife, the former Juliann Butler, built their home in Riverview in 1933. Reportedly the lot was chosen because it was the only one left on deep water on Smith's Creek at the head of the Nansemond River. Dr. Ellison and son, Jack, were outdoorsmen who enjoyed keeping a small boat at their dock to have easy access to the river. But they weren't the only ones who enjoyed the dock—Doc's Dock as it was called. One of Jack's contemporaries recalls that it was a T-shaped dock reaching across the marsh. It was built mostly by W. Hill Kilby who, by the 1940s had built a house on newly opened Butler Avenue. Mr. Kilby would keep a boat at Doc's Dock, too. The same contemporary remembers that every spring neighborhood mothers would march their children down to Dr. Ellison for him to give them a typhoid shot.

They cried on the way there and on the way back, he said. The Ellisons made additions to their original house overtime—a den at one end and upstairs bedrooms at the other. Three generations would enjoy the house. Dr. Ellison died in 1957 when his boat capsized in Lake Drummond during a storm. After Mrs. Ellison died in 1989 Jack and his family came to live in his childhood home. The current owners, Mr. and Mrs. Clay White, have made a few changes including adding a sunroom to take advantage of the view.

Information thanks to Betty Ellison and Austin Darden



The Beamon-Haas House

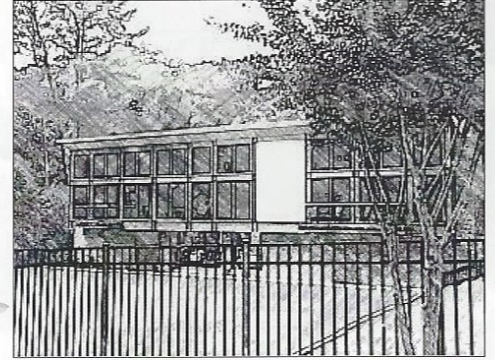
807 Dumville Avenue

In the 1950s Jones Street and Dumville Avenue were just being developed. The streets had been laid out years before but were only now being paved. Western Avenue, West Riverview Drive, and North Broad Street had been paved for some time.

Mr. and Mrs. George Beamon and their children were living with his father on Main Street when they bought their Riverview lot in 1955. A few years passed before they built their house. George Beamon drew the plans. He designed a house that took advantage of the sharply sloping lot. It had a basement with, most notably, a large recreation room that was especially enjoyed by the three children and their friends. Before too many years passed a swimming pool was added outside the rec room.

In 2009 Michael Haas bought the property and dreamed up a large addition, contemporary in style, which more than doubled the size of the house. This place is full of modern innovations but, rather ironically, overlooks a three-quarter croquet lawn for the enjoyment of a game that was popular a century ago. The game continues to be popular especially with Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Haas who are the current residents.

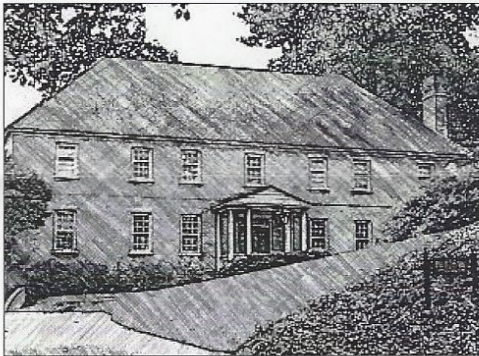
Information thanks to Nancy Pichel, Conrad & Marie Haas, and Marty Debranski



Laurel Cliff

The Smith-Adams

826 W. Riverview Drive



Laurel Cliff Country Club was gone, all the streets had been paved, and Lake Meade had been formed by the time Lawrence and Sally Birdsong Smith bought their rolling piece of land in 1967. John Paul C. Hanbury was chosen to design the new house. Colonial Williamsburg might have provided some of the inspiration. The scale of the house is grand and well suited for hospitality. In fact, soon after the Smiths moved in 250-300 people were entertained at Mrs. Smith sister's wedding reception here.

A subsequent owner named the house Laurel Cliff for the old club that once stood nearby. The current owners, Dr. Hannah and Mr. Jimmy Adams bought the house in 2006 and enjoy it with their young children. They favor a sleek, modern aesthetic that somehow seems perfectly at home in this gracious, accommodating house.

Information thanks to Muff Noldy and Dr. Hannah Adams

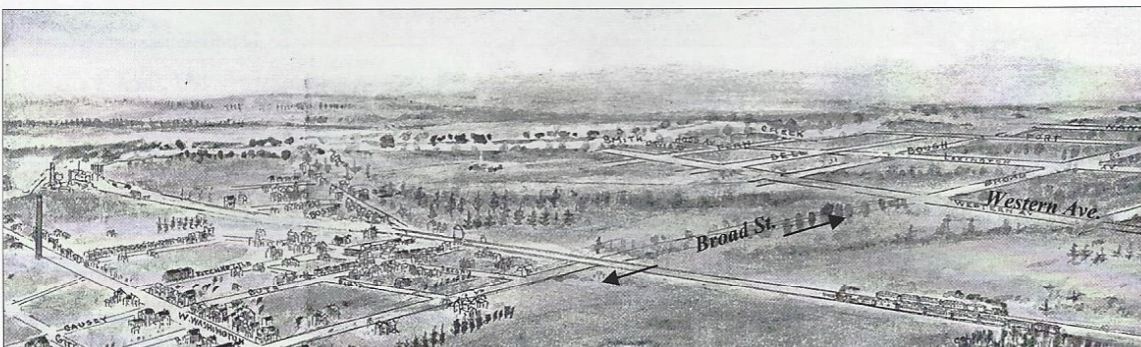
The Johnson House

709 Jones Street

Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Johnson came to Suffolk from Texas in the 1970s because of his work with Birdsong Peanuts. In 1981 they bought the back garden of a house that fronts Broad Street and built their home. While much of the mature garden had to be removed for construction, some of the beautiful old azaleas still remain.

This house fits seamlessly into a block of traditional houses but climb the hill and open the door. Here one finds a sophisticated interior featuring interesting collections—gem quality minerals, for example—beautifully displayed. Many of the items have been collected on the owners' world travels.

Information thanks to Scherry Johnson



A 1907 Bird's Eye View shows the neighborhood of Riverview in the upper right corner.

Photo courtesy of Kermit Hobbs

Scrapbook



The Hines house shown perhaps c. 1950. Awnings were helpful in the days pre air conditioning.

Photo courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Everett Birdsong



Lee Jordan Clubhouse was the spot for our fall meeting, thanks to owner George Gatling.

Photo courtesy of Lynn Cross

Lee Hart, below, poses with his Siberian Husky, Rex after their happy reunion in 1958. Rex was missing for the better part of a week from their home at 824 West Riverview Drive before being found by Norman Gary the cook and caretaker for Lee Jordan Clubhouse.

Gary knew the dog was missing because he had heard the announcement on WLPM radio.



Above are Gordon Parker (L) and Lee Hart (R) on Hart's homemade raft. Hart named the raft "The Husky" after his faithful friend, Rex, and kept it docked under the bridge to Laurel Cliff.

Photos courtesy of Lee Hart



Donnie Beamon and father, George, in front of their Dumville Avenue home. C. 1970

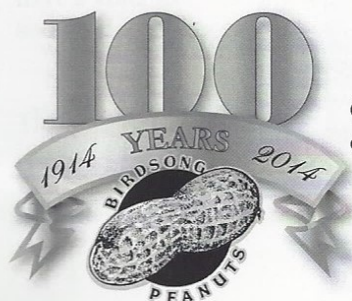
Photo courtesy of Sip Beamon Mouden



old Jack's Camp
Great Dismal Swamp, 1934

Front Row L-R:
Henry Boone (cook's son), Dr. C.J. Riddick, Dr. Lem Harrell, Bill Allen, Henry S. Eley (City of Suffolk Treasurer), "Doc" Harrell, Bill Joe Barnes, Neil Boone (down in front)

Back Row L-R:
Allie H. Powell (game warden), P.G. Cox (built the Hines house), George Cox, Townie Piland (in background), Wallace Walton, Staley Bobb (in front of Walden), Bill Stale, Oscar King, Dr. D.L. Harrell



Celebrating 100 years
of Birdsong Peanuts

Scrapbook

One Rescued at Lake Drummond

Sunday, April 7, 1957

2 Suffolk Men Lost on Lake As Wind Capsizes Small Boat

By Clarence Lane

WALLACETON — A prominent Suffolk physician and a companion were feared drowned yesterday when their small boat capsized on wind-lashed Lake Drummond.

The missing men were identified as Dr. Roland Ellison, about 50, who is associated with Lakeview Clinic and a staff physician at Obici Memorial Hospital, and C. Thornton Earley, about 55, of 334 Pinner St., Suffolk.

A third man in their boat, Bennie Powell, 58, Rt. 3, Suffolk, held onto the overturned craft and was blown to the southeast shore of the lake.

Powell reportedly was in a semi-conscious condition when he was found by Dewey Howell, of Bosley avenue, who was at a camp near where the boat went ashore.

Three other men from Suffolk who were members of the weekend fishing party which included Dr. Ellison and Earley succeeded in crossing the lake.

They were J. I. Jones, 208 Cen-

tral Ave.; D. O. Potter, 206 1/2 Causey Ave.; and J. Vernon Spiven, 101 Highland Ave.

Jones said the party arrived at the lake's spillway at noon.

Their plan was to cross the lake to a hunting and fishing camp known as Jack's Camp.

"The water was extremely rough," said Spivey. "The waves were running three or four feet high and close enough together to give the boat a rough buffet-ing."

Jones said he clung desperately to a rope in order to stay in the boat.

"When we got to the other side I had the prints of the rope on my hand," Jones said.

They were not aware that their companions' boat was in trouble until a short time after they reached the camp site.

"The other boat was too far behind for us to see it," Jones said.

Powell was taken to Obici Memorial Hospital where he was admitted for treatment of shock.

He reportedly walked into the hospital.

Before he entered the hospital he is reported to have told friends the following account of what happened:

When he, Dr. Ellison and Earley got about one-third of the way across the lake, the 10 horsepower motor on the 16 foot boat failed.

By the time they got the motor to running again, the boat was about half full of water. They were not able to bring the craft under control because of the rough waves and high winds.

Lose Hold On Boat

The boat capsized about 1 p.m. The three men clung to it for about an hour. Then Earley and Dr. Ellison, unable to hold on any longer, slipped under water.

Powell said he was able to pull Dr. Ellison back to the boat a number of times until his strength failed him.

Calendar of Events

Dec. 6&7

38th Annual Candlelight Tour
Riverview: Tradition with a Twist
1-5:00 pm

Dec. 6

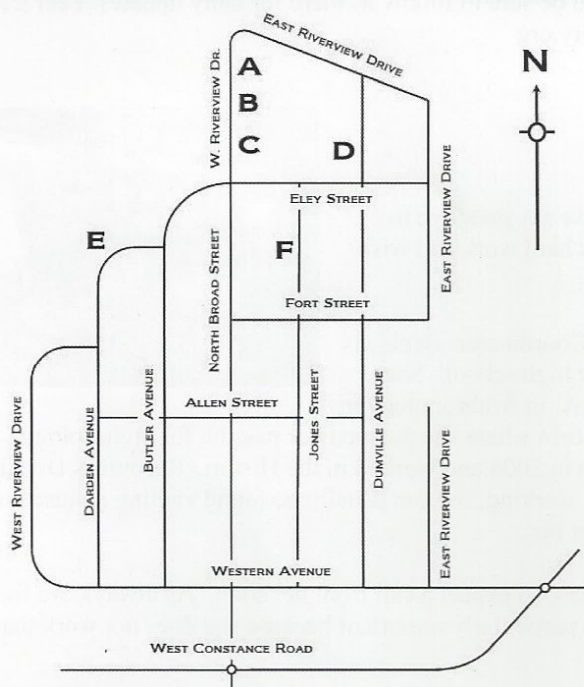
Virginia Handbell Concert
4:00 pm
Free and open to the public at
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
213 N. Main St

Dec. 6&7

The Nutcracker at
1:30 pm
The Suffolk Center

Dec. 13

Suffolk Christmas Parade
Downtown
7:00 pm



A Adams House
826 West Riverview Drive
B Woodward House
824 West Riverview Drive
C Birdsong House
810 West Riverview Drive

D Haas House
807 Dumville Avenue
E White House
537 West Riverview Drive
F Johnson House
709 Jones Street

Thanks to these additional Candlelight Tour Sponsors:

Bennett's Creek Pharmacy; Harbourview Oral Surgery;
A.B. Cole & Associates; Saunders & Ojeda, PC.;
Woof to Hoof Pet Services; R.L. Howell D.D.S.;
Pretlow & Pretlow; Tile & Terrazzo, LLC

Thanks to our Ticket Sponsors:

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and
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Riverview/Creekview?

If you ask someone who grew up in Riverview pre-Lake Meade what body of water used to run behind Riverview he'd say, "the River." Old Riverview Land Co. deeds and the Bird's Eye View of 1907 call that waterway Smith or Smith's Creek. Smith's Creek and Cohoon's Creek came together near the site of present day Lake Meade dam, forming the headwaters of the main branch of the Nansemond River.

Map courtesy of Kermit Hobbs

News from the Phillips-Dawson House

In August we bade a fond farewell to Julie Johnson. For seven years she was the gracious, welcoming presence and capable manager at the Dawson House. She and husband Johnnie have been and continue to be wonderful SNHS volunteers, as well.

The house is still a bit out of place but improving. The halls, upstairs and down, have undergone plaster repairs and painting as overseen by Nita Bagnell (photos right). After a thorough cleaning the downstairs is being put into place again, much refreshed.

The Heirloom Sale was considered a great success this year. We made well over \$3000 and items are still being sold. The proceeds from that event benefit the Phillips-Dawson House renovation fund. Thanks to all who contributed in any way. If you are interested in purchasing any items left over from the sale please contact us at 757.539.2781 or email: info@suffolkhistory.org

Candlelight Tour takes many volunteers and staff hours and is our major fundraiser each year. Please come out and support the Tour. The theme is a hint that this year might be a bit different and lots of fun!



In September we welcomed a new Executive Director to the Historical Society. Ashley Nicole Lorenzen, better known to us as Nicole or Nikki, comes to the Society by way of Fairbanks, Alaska where she spent the summer interning for the Pioneer Air Museum. Lorenzen is a graduate of George Washington University where she earned her Master's Degree in Museum Studies while interning with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and Carlyle House Historic Park in Alexandria, Virginia. Lorenzen also has a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Jumping in with both feet Lorenzen has assumed Julie Johnson's role and is excited to expand the Historical Society's offerings in the future to include an updated website, more educational programs, exhibits, and better access to the Historical Society's collections both on-site and online. Readers may have noticed that our

Facebook page has also seen an increase in activity thanks to Lorenzen so be sure to follow us there for daily updates! Feel free to write in with any requests or questions you may have! info@suffolkhistory.org



News from the Train Station

A change in command has happened for the Train Station once again as we say goodbye to manager Kevin Long. Although with us only briefly we thank him for his hard work and wish him all the best in his new endeavors.

We are happy to introduce you to Denise Dooley, our new Train Station Coordinator. Denise is a native of historic Bucks County, PA. and moved to North Carolina after high school. She graduated from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington with a B.A. in Anthropology in 1999. For several years she worked for a cultural resources management firm where she pursued her passion for archaeology, artifact conservation, and historic architecture. Denise moved to Virginia in 2008 and worked in the Historic Resources Division of Isle of Wight County where she fell in love with local history. When not working, she can usually be found visiting a museum or historic site, or working on her family genealogy. Please come by to meet her.



Denise would like to re-establish a working relationship with the volunteers, so expect a call from her soon. As always, we like to have a volunteer working with her at all times and Sunday afternoons are particularly important because she does not work that day and we depend on you to keep the doors open.

This year's Touch-a-Truck event was a success thanks to all who participated. Watch for pictures in our next issue.

Don't forget to visit the Train Station Gift Shop for all of your holiday shopping needs! Of course we have local peanuts but we also have a selection of history books for any book lovers in the family and toys and games for the kids!

Thanks to our 2014 corporate members:

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The Phillips-Dawson House



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To Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society
From the Suffolk Christian Church
Afternoon Circle



Suffolk's Most Recognizable Landmark

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Phone: 757-923-4750

Email: kevin@suffolktrainstation.org

Kevin Long, Train Station Coordinator



Postcards circa 1907



Postcards from the scrapbook of Hettie & Pauline Smith



38th Annual Candlelight Tour Riverview: Tradition With a Twist

Saturday, December 6 & Sunday December 7

1-5:00 pm

Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 on Tour days

Available in advance at the Train Station, Suffolk Visitor

Center, A. Dodson's, and Bennett's Creek Pharmacy

On tour day at the Train Station, the Haas House

and the White House

Start the season with this community tradition.

Tickets are good both days

For more information call 757.539.2781

Food for purchase in Riverview from Ricky and Roy's Catering

SUFFOLK NANSEMOND



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